

NIXON FUND PANEL MUST FACE COURT

U.S. Says It Did Not Repay Money It Allegedly Gave Watergate Defendant

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 11—The Justice Department today charged President Nixon's campaign finance committee with eight violations of Federal law in failing to record and report \$31,300 that it had allegedly given to one of the defendants in the Watergate bugging trial.

In a criminal information filed at the United States District Court, the Government said that the defendant, Gordon Liddy, was given between April and June of last year two payments of \$12,000 each and one of \$5,300, and that he "effected the expenditure" of an additional \$2,000 of Nixon campaign money.

None of the disbursements were recorded properly by the finance committee or reported to the Office of Federal Elections as required by the Federal Campaign Spending Law of 1971, according to the Justice Department.

Nothing in the charges links the money allegedly given to

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Mr. Liddy to the Watergate bugging, and there is no indication of why it was given to him or what he used it for.

The two \$12,000 payments are said to have gone to Mr. Liddy from Hugh P. Sloan Jr., who until July 14 was the finance committee's treasurer. Mr. Sloan has been called before a grand jury investigating the Watergate case and is scheduled to appear as a prosecution witness at the trial, which began on Monday.

The \$5,300, according to the information, was given to Mr. Liddy by Herbert L. Porter, the Nixon campaign's scheduling director.

This is the first criminal action filed by the Justice Department under the campaign finance law.

Two violations are charged with respect to each of the four payments mentioned, one for failing to maintain a receipt of the transaction and one for not reporting the expenditure of the money to the Office of Federal Elections, a branch of the General Accounting Office charged with overseeing the campaign spending law.

Each violation is a misdemeanor and carries a maximum penalty of one year in prison and a fine of \$1,000. However, only the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President, and none of the individuals said to have been involved, was named as a defendant in the action, and thus no one would be jailed if the committee was found guilty.

The Justice Department also filed charges today against three unsuccessful candidates for Congress who it said had also violated the Federal Elections Act.

They are Fritjof P. Thygeson, who ran on the Peace and Freedom party ticket in California's 40th Congressional District; Charles W. Johnson, who lost a bid for the Democratic party nomination in Ohio's 17th District in a primary election May 2, and William C. Haden, a Democrat, who was defeated in the Pennsylvania primary elec-

tion on April 25 in that state's 14th District.

In August, the Office of Federal Elections made an audit of the Nixon finance committee's records and subsequently referred to the Justice Department a list of "apparent violations" of the election spending laws involving some \$350,000 in contributions to the President's campaign.

A Justice Department spokesman said that the charges brought today were "in part" a culmination of that report and also of the department's own investigation.

Phillip S. Hughes, who heads the elections office, said that he had not known that the charges were being filed and was unsure whether any of the violations alleged today had been uncovered by his office earlier.

The Justice Department would not say whether it was still considering other charges contained in the G.A.O. report.

Committee Replies

A spokesman for the Nixon finance committee said that the Justice Department's charges referred to "technical and unintentional failures to comply with certain sections of a complex new election law," and that the matter had been referred to the committee's lawyers.

Three of the "apparent violations" reported by the Office of Federal Elections, and on which the Justice Department has not yet acted, involved \$114,000 in contributions to the Nixon campaign that later turned up in the Florida bank account of Bernard L. Barker, one of Mr. Liddy's co-defendants in the Watergate trial.

Mr. Barker was one of five men arrested with bugging equipment inside the Democratic party's offices in the Watergate complex on June 17.

At the trial yesterday, the chief Government prosecutor, Earl J. Silbert, said in his opening statement that Mr. Liddy had been given \$235,000 by the Nixon campaign organization to finance an "intelligence operation" against the Democrats during the campaign.